

NEWSLINE

Montana Department of Transportation

mdt.mt.gov

September 2018

Bridge and Road Safety and Accountability Act Update

ince March 1 of this year, MDT and local governments have been putting Bridge and Road Safety and Accountability Act (BaRSAA) funding to work improving roadways across the state. BaRSAA funding is generated by the increased user fee applied to gasoline and diesel fuel passed by the 65th Montana Legislature and made effective July 1, 2017.

As of September 7, 2018, MDT has identified 59 projects in all five MDT districts that will utilize these funds. The total funds (BaRSAA and Federal) to be used on these projects is projected at over \$215 million. The additional BaRSAA revenue allows the Department to continue to match all available Federal highway construction funding.

At a local level, millions of dollars of BaRSAA funds have been distributed to city, town, or county governments that have requested their funds. BaRSAA funds are vital to leveraging federal and local resources to maintain and preserve Montana's road and street network.

As a reminder, local governments have until **November 1** to submit a request to MDT for either distribution or reservation of their BaRSAA funds, or they'll miss out on 2017 funds. Additional information on the request process, required documents, and the allocations available to local governments can be found at https://mdt.mt.gov/roadbridge/.

MDT, the Montana Association of Counties and the Montana League of Cities and Towns encourage local governments to request distribution of their allocated BaRSAA funds prior to November 1. Per statutory requirements, any unused funds will be redistributed to all local governments in the spring of 2019.

November 1 Deadline Approaching for BaRSAA Funds

Cities, Towns and Counties don't

miss out on your allocated BaRSAA funds. Submit your request for your funds using Webgrants at: https://fundingmt.org/index.do.

The request must include:

- The amount of BaRSAA funding sought;
- An adopted resolution to request and accept the funding including the source of the local matching funds; and
- A description of the road or bridge construction, reconstruction, maintenance or repair project.

More information is available on the MDT website: https://mdt.mt.gov/roadbridge/

Need help submitting your request? Call MDT at (406) 444-7294

Questions on the BaRSAA program can be directed to the Montana League of Cities and Towns or the Montana Association of Counties. Additional information is also available on the MLCT and MACO websites:

https://mtleague.org/resources/

http://mtcounties.org/resources/fiscal-informationforms/bridge-and-road-safety-and-accountability-actbarsaa



Federal Surface Transportation Program Status

s fall approaches, MDT is wrapping up delivery of the 2018 construction program and beginning to update our 2019 and beyond schedule. MDT performs this update around this time each year marrying projects under development to available construction funding for a five-year period, adding the fifth year to the plan as the current year nears completion and drops off. MDT has had a relatively stable program since the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST Act) was passed in 2015, but in updating the plan this year, we need to begin considering program funding beyond the Act, which expires at the end of FY 2020.

Recently, there's been heightened awareness of the need to preserve and protect the nation's infrastructure; as evidenced through congressional and administration discussions of potential standalone infrastructure funding and the real additional funding provided for broad categories of infrastructure through recent appropriations processes. MDT is hopeful that this recognition will carry over into Congress coming to agreement on the next long-term federal surface transportation program before the expiration date. Having a long-term funding bill provides program stability and allows states to plan and make the best investment decisions based on available funding when addressing the growing needs of the nation's roads and bridges. MDT has a long history of participating in reauthorization discussions through national transportation organizations, state coalitions, and working directly with Montana's Congressional Delegation. We'll continue these efforts to ensure that rural state needs are considered in every aspect of the program.

Transportation Alternatives Program Overview

DT's Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program is authorized under the current Federal-aid Highway Program, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST Act). TA program funds can be used for a variety of purposes, but MDT focuses its TA program funds on improvements that contribute toward the policy objectives of TranPlanMT, the statewide, long-range transportation plan. TranPlanMT defines MDT's policy direction for operating, preserving and improving Montana's transportation system based on technical analysis along with public and stakeholder input. The top goal of the plan is to preserve and maintain existing transportation infrastructure with MDT funding, while safety is an overarching goal applied in nearly every MDT decision-making process.

In the last round of applications, MDT added a preservation category for existing paths that were originally built with federal-aid funds. The addition of this category contributes toward the maintenance and preservation policy goal of TranPlanMT.

To date, some 52 applications have been accepted by the TA Program. Of these, 21 projects have been constructed, 12 projects are scheduled for construction this year, and 19 traditional and preservation projects are in the process of being designed. Project summaries of completed TA projects can be viewed at:

https://mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta_completed.shtml.



Stay tuned for the next round of applications. Once initiated, the application period will be open for about three months.

Information about the TA program is available on the MDT Transportation Alternatives website: https://mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta application.shtml.

For more Information, contact Dave Holien at 444-6118 or *dholien@mt.gov*.

Emergency Repair Projects Around Montana

pring 2018 flooding resulted in 16 sites with significant damage requiring MDT engineering work and construction repair projects. Currently, construction projects are underway at half of the sites with significant damage. The remaining sites require additional design work prior to the letting of a construction project. Additionally, MDT Maintenance forces have already completed repair work at dozens of locations that experienced minor flood damage. All construction is expected to be completed by next summer.

Major projects include:

- A slide repair project on Blue Slide Road (near Thompson Falls).
- Significant damage to three bridges on MT-21 (near Augusta) due to flooding along Elk Creek.
- Severe erosion damage along US-12 (west of Roundup) due to Musselshell River flooding.
- Culvert replacement projects on I-15 (near Helena) and I-90 (near Lodge Grass).

The total estimated cost for the repair work currently sits at \$20 million. MDT has applied for Federal Emergency Relief Program funding and hopes to receive reimbursement for the majority of the expenditures associated with these repairs.

For more information, contact Paul Johnson at 444-7259 or paujohnson@mt.gov.



Blue Slide Road damage near Thompson Falls



Bridge and road damage on MT-21 near Augusta due to flooding

Local Transit Providers Receive \$3.5 Million for Capital Investments

TDT will be providing transit grant awards of over \$3.5 million to local community transit services to support and enhance local public transportation. Safe and reliable public transportation systems benefit each Montana community they serve by reducing congestion and acting as vital connections to services for those who need help with mobility.

MDT has approved awards to purchase buses, equipment, and routing software for 18 rural public transportation services, as well as Montana's three largest cities. Jefferson Lines, which provides intercity services and connects to destinations outside of Montana, is part of this award and will use funds to upgrade its motor coaches.

For more information, contact David Jacobs at 444-9192 or dajacobs@mt.gov.

Montana Essential Freight Rail Loan Applications

MDT will be soliciting loan applications for the Montana Essential Freight Rail Loan Program beginning in September. For more information, go to: https://mdt.mt.gov/business/grants_rail.shtml



Montana Celebrates General Aviation Appreciation Month

Overnor Steve Bullock recognized August 2018 as General Aviation Appreciation Month in the state of Montana.

The Governor's recognition letter states that "General aviation and community airports play a critical role in the lives of Montanans. According to the Montana Airports 2016 Economic Impact Study, airports in Montana support 23,849 jobs, an annual payroll of over \$838 million, and generate over \$2.7 billion for the state's economy. Communities of all sizes across the state depend on general aviation and community airports for the continued flow of commerce, tourists, and visitors to our state."

Montana has 128 public-use airports which serve 3,817 pilots and 2,385 active general aviation aircraft. General aviation is integral to Montana's response to emergencies and natural disasters, as well as a key component of business travel, aviation training, and visitors to Big Sky Country.

MDT and the Aeronautics Division were pleased and excited to have celebrated "General Aviation Appreciation Month" in August with Governor Bullock.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan and Survey Results

s part of the development of the Montana Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, an online survey was conducted to help assess existing conditions for pedestrian and bicycle transportation in Montana. Special effort was made to reach a diverse population during distribution of the survey with outreach to special interest groups, stakeholders, decision-makers, nonmotorized users and motorists. The survey was open to the public on the MDT project website from April 18 through June 10, 2018.

A total of 1,960 people responded to the survey with representation from 43 Montana counties. Most respondents were from Missoula, Flathead, Lewis and Clark, and Gallatin counties. People living in urban areas made up about 58 percent of respondents, while about 20 percent indicated that they live in a small town, 10 percent live in the urban fringe, and 12 percent live in rural counties. Most people, roughly 65 percent, fell within the 35 to 65 age range.

Many respondents indicated that biking or walking, approximately 20 percent and 6 percent, respectively, was their primary mode of transportation. These percentages indicate a high response rate from our active transportation community, as the U.S. Census Bureau 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5 -year Estimate indicates approximately 5 percent of the population in Montana walks to work and less than 2 percent bikes to work.

Most respondents stated exercise or recreation as a reason for walking (91 percent) or biking (85 percent), while more than half of the respondents listed environmental reasons as why they walk or bike. The cost effectiveness of alternative modes of transportation was also a common reason.

When asked to select up to four issues they deemed most important for walking and biking, respondents listed safety most often (81 percent), followed by connectivity (53 percent), maintenance (51 percent), condition (46 percent), and environment and health (41 percent).

The results of the survey will be analyzed and discussed in greater detail in the Existing Conditions Technical Memorandum and will be used to help identify objectives to achieve the vision and goals. The Vision and Goals Technical Memorandum is available for review on the project website.

For more information about the Plan, opportunities to review reports, and to subscribe for updates, visit https://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/pedbike/.

How often do you typically bike for the following trip purposes?

Leisure & Fitness

25% Daily 42% Weekly 19% Daily
15% Weekly

Shopping & Errands

8% Daily 26% Weekly Access Parks/Trails/Rec



How often do you typically walk for the following trip purposes?

Leisure & Fitness



47% Daily **37%** Weekly

Commute 139 9%

13% Daily 9% Weekly

Shopping & Errands 9% Daily 28% Weekly

24% Daily 41% Weekly

Annual Transportation Safety Meeting Save the Dates Great Northern Hotel, 835 Great Northern Boulevard in Helena October 10-11

Emphasis Areas:

Roadway Departure & Intersection Crashes Impaired Driving Crashes Occupant Protection

October 10 from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and October 11 from 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Montana's Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan

This event will bring together local, tribal, state, and federal safety partners and stakeholders to assess Montana's progress in reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries. Hear about coordinated efforts and implementation of recent safety projects that are improving driver behavior in Montana.

An agenda is under development and will be posted at https://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/plans/chsp-meetings.shtml. For more information, contact Pam Langve-Davis at 444-7646 or plangvedavis@mt.gov.



Traffic Deaths and Injuries Can be Avoided



The number of traffic deaths and injuries spikes in Montana in the summer months. As of September 10, 119 people have lost their lives in crashes on Montana roadways in 2018. More than half of these deaths occurred between the months of June and August.

Sadly, many of these deaths and injuries could have been avoided. The 2018 Montana Highway Patrol's preliminary investigative data indicates that 50 percent of vehicle occupants who died were not properly wearing a seat belt, and 50 percent died in crashes where an impaired driver is suspected. Crashes involving only one vehicle accounted for 71 percent of fatal crashes, and 64 percent of fatal crashes happened during daylight hours.

MDT reminds all travelers to buckle up, use ageappropriate child safety seats, pay attention, and always have a sober driver. These preventive measures are critical in saving lives and reaching Vision Zero, zero deaths and zero serious injuries on Montana roads. For more information on safe driving, visit the Vision Zero website https://mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/people/.

Contact the State Highway Traffic Safety Section, Janet Kenny at 444-7417 or *jakenny@mt.gov* for more information.

Transportation Asset Management Plan Update

The 2018 Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) recently received certification for federal compliance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The TAMP supports achieving short-term performance targets and making progress toward MDT's vision for Interstate and Non-Interstate National Highway System (NHS) pavements and bridges.

The TAMP documents MDT business practices and aligns the Department's Performance Programming Process (P3), data collection, and asset management reporting with related federal requirements. P3 is based on Department policy and procedures to develop an optimal investment plan that achieves progress toward performance goals established in the state's long-range transportation policy plan, TranPlanMT.

MDT asset management continues to center on providing the right treatment at the right time within MDT's constrained budget in order to preserve the condition and performance of existing transportation infrastructure. Since the 1990s, MDT has implemented asset management practices with this emphasis.

The initial TAMP, adopted in 2015 after passage of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), bolstered MDT's existing asset management processes. Final rules were adopted in late 2016 by FHWA for state risk-based asset management plans, prompting the 2018 update. The TAMP remains based on MDT's statewide policy and planning goals with decision making and analysis support provided by Department data management systems, procedures, and staff expertise.

The TAMP is available at https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/plans/2018-tamp-report.pdf.

Back to School Safety Tips and Reminders



chool is back in session, which means children will be walking and biking to school and school busses will be out during morning and afternoon commutes. Now is a great time for parents and kids to refresh their traffic safety knowledge. Whether children walk, ride their bicycle, or take the bus to school, it is imperative that they and the motorists around them take the right safety measures.

MDT reminds everyone to be attentive, share the road, and obey all traffic laws. It is important that children be visible, cross the street only at crosswalks and intersections, and look left, right, and left again before crossing the street. Motorists must



avoid distractions while driving and watch for bicyclists, pedestrians, and children, especially at intersections, bus stops, and school zones. To see more safety tips, please visit MDT's bicycle and pedestrian webpage and review the share the road quick tips at https://mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/bikeped/.

On October 10, students, parents, and volunteers are expected to walk, bicycle, and roll to school to celebrate International Walk to School Day, an annual event that is celebrated in more than 40 countries worldwide. This event is focused on encouraging children to walk or bike to school and can have a positive impact on communities. Walking and biking are great ways to exercise, reduce traffic congestion, and teach children traffic safety skills at an early age. Be sure to check with your local school about this event. For more information on International Walk to School Day, visit https://www.walkbiketoschool.org/.



Students biking and walking to school.

Be Aware and Prepared—Wildlife Are on the Move

ne sign that fall has arrived in Montana is the increased movement of wildlife. Breeding season, hunting season, and the approach of winter means an increased presence of wildlife near and crossing roadways. Be prepared and keep the following tips in mind as you travel:

Be extra cautious at dawn and dusk—Many animals, especially deer, are most active during these times so be aware, don't use cruise control, and drive at a lower speed. Using high beams at night when there is no oncoming traffic will help spot animals sooner.

See one? Look for another—Deer and other wildlife rarely travel alone, so if there is one, there are probably more. Slow down and be prepared for other wildlife to appear.

Scan the road ahead—Continually scan the road ahead for signs of animals and movement. Slow down when approaching deer or other wildlife standing near roadsides, as they have a tendency to bolt, possibly into traffic. Use emergency flashers to warn oncoming drivers after spotting animal hazards.

Don't swerve—Use brakes if an impact is imminent. Swerving away from animals can lead to head-on collisions with other vehicles, impacts with objects on the side of the road, or rolling the vehicle. Avoiding collision with wildlife comes down to expecting the unexpected, being sober behind the wheel, driving at lower speeds, and giving full attention to driving. The best way to prevent injury for drivers and passengers is to buckle up. If you hit an animal—Pull over onto the road shoulder, turn on emergency flashers, and watch for traffic before exiting the vehicle. Do not try to remove an animal from the roadway unless it is safe to do so and the animal is dead; an injured animal can be dangerous. For help and to report a collision, call appropriate law enforcement; the city police, county sheriff, or the Montana Highway Patrol at (855) 647-3777.

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New MDT Research Projects Approved



nnually, in February and March, MDT solicits new research ideas. A simple Stage 1: Research Idea form is due March 31. Internal champions are required for each research idea. After a review of the literature, the champion determines if the research idea

should move forward to Stage 2. If so, Stage 2: Research Topic Statement forms are due April 30.

In May, champions present their research topics to MDT's high-level Research Review Committee (RRC) and District Administrators. In May, June, or July, these two groups determine which research topics will move forward to technical panels. MDT approved seven new research projects to move forward to the technical panel stage for federal fiscal year 2019 (October 1, 2018 thru September 30, 2019). Panels have been formed and are meeting to determine the scope of each research project. More information on MDT's research project process can be viewed at https://mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/res_overview.shtml.

MDT approved seven new research projects to move forward to the technical panel stage for FFY 2019 (October 1, 2018 thru September 30, 2019).

- Effectiveness of Highway Safety Public Education at Montana Motor Vehicle Division and Vehicle Registration Stations by Using Safety Videos -Contact: Kirsten Seeber
- Developing a Systematic Approach for Safety Improvements on Low-Volume Roads in Montana - Contact: Will Kline
- Use of Fluorescent Orange Delineators in Temporary Traffic Control Work Zones Contact: Kirsten Seeber
- Monitoring Streamflow Using Video Cameras -Contact: Will Kline
- Concrete-Filled Steel Tube to Concrete Pile Cap Connections – Further Evaluation/Improvement of Analysis/Design Methodologies: Phase 2- Specimen Testing - Contact: Will Kline
- Evaluation of Thin Polymer Overlays for Bridge Decks - Contact: Will Kline
- Bridge Deck Cracking Investigation Contact: Will Kline

For more information, please contact the Research Project Manager listed for each of these projects. Kirsten Seeber can be reached at *kseeber@mt.gov* or (608)620-5820 and Will Kline can be reached at *wkline@mt.gov* or (920)771-0092.

Differential Speed Limits on Two-Lane Roads

Imit history ranging from reasonable and prudent to the current law of differential speed limits between commercial and passenger vehicles that was enacted on May 28, 1999. Montana is currently the only state that maintains a differential speed limit for passenger cars and heavy trucks on undivided, rural highways. Although a considerable amount of research investigated the impacts of speed limits on traffic safety and operations, much of this research and nearly all the research related to differential speed limits has been specific to limited access freeways. To address this gap in knowledge, a comprehensive study was performed for MDT related to the safety impacts of differential speed limits on rural, two-lane highways.

The primary objective of this study was to assess differences in traffic operational and driver behavior characteristics along high-speed, two-lane highways in Montana. A maximum daytime speed limit of 70 miles per hour (mph) for passenger vehicles and 60 mph for trucks and buses with greater than one-ton payload capacity is in effect for most of the state-maintained rural, two-lane highway systems in Montana. However, in April 2013, speed limits were changed along 55 miles of portions of two eastern Montana highways (MT-16 and MT-200) to 65 mph for all vehicles.

Data were collected at numerous locations from across Montana, where 70/60 mph differential speed limits are common and included the limited Montana two-lane roadway segments with uniform 65 mph speed limits. To provide additional uniform 65 mph highway locations, data were also collected on rural highway segments in the neighboring states of Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

The findings from this study provide substantial evidence in support of uniform 65 mph speed limits for two-lane, rural roadways in Montana. Speed variability will likely be reduced due to the reduction of passenger vehicle speeds. Reduction in the variability of speeds between passenger cars and trucks is expected to reduce platoon lengths and subsequent high-risk passing behavior, thereby reducing the risk of passing-related crashes. Based on the collective findings, uniform 65 mph speed limits are recommended for further implementation on twolane highways in Montana. Although the findings from this research support statewide implementation of 65 mph limits, it was initially advisable to continue selective implementation of the speed limit on certain candidate segments. Initial candidates include roadways with high traffic volumes (i.e., greater than 3,000 annual average daily traffic), high truck percentages (i.e., greater than 10 percent), and limited passing opportunities (i.e., greater than 40 percent no passing zones with few passing relief lanes). Currently, several highway corridors that generally meet the criteria identified in this research have traffic studies/analysis underway.

To learn more about this project, visit: https://mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/traffic/ differential_speed.shtml.

Cyr Bridge Crosses the Clark Fork River by Alberton

By Jon Axline, MDT Historian

The Great Depression was a time of big highway and bridge projects. During that tumultuous decade, the Montana Highway Department built over 5,000 miles of roadway and constructed nearly 2,000 bridges. Most of the bridges were small timber and steel stringer structures, but there were a few enormous bridges as well, like the structure built across the Missouri River at Culbertson in 1934 and a bridge across the Yellowstone River at Billings in 1935.

But, the Highway Department wasn't the only one building roads and bridges in Montana at that time. The federal Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) not only oversaw the state highway commission's programs, but also built roads and bridges on National Forest and other federal lands. From 1930 to 1941, the BPR built highways mostly in western and southcentral Montana; many BPR bridges still stand. The BPR obtained its funding from Montana's biennial Federal Aid appropriation. Once a year, representatives from the agency met with the highway commission to determine which federal lands projects would be funded and the amount of money allocated for those projects. The BPR designed and built its own projects with no input from the state. The roads and bridges all met the federal and state design standards, but in the case of bridges, the BPR bridges looked a little different, which makes them easy to distinguish from state-designed bridges.

One of the most spectacular historic bridges in Montana was designed and built by the BPR during the 1930s. The Cyr Bridge crosses the Clark Fork about three miles west of the community of Alberton in Mineral County. The structure is a five-span, 518-foot steel deck truss bridge, a type becoming increasingly rare in Montana. Located at the head of the Alberton Gorge, which provides a dramatic backdrop for the structure, the Cyr Bridge features nearly 300 tons of steel in the trusses, spans the river 88 feet above the water, and sports the distinctive reinforced concrete guardrails common to BPR bridges.

On August 26, 1932, the BPR awarded a project to Kalispell-based contractor Archie Douglas to build a new six-mile segment of US Highway 10 between Alberton and Cyr. A week later, on September 2, the agency signed a \$61,853 contract with Nolan Brothers of Minneapolis to build a bridge across the river on the new stretch of roadway. Nolan Brothers had a long history of road and bridge projects in Montana during the Twenties under the auspices of the state highway commission. The new highway segment and bridge created a shorter and better alignment of US 10. Prior to 1933, the old Yellowstone Trail highway crossed the Clark Fork on the Natural Pier Bridge a mile west of Alberton and then utilized a narrow and treacherous road just a few feet above the river at the base of the Northern Pacific Railway grade. The route crossed the river at the Scenic Bridge four miles west of Cyr.

The contractor began work on the bridge's foundations shortly after winning the contract. Nolan Brothers had to follow the federal government's newly enacted employment regulations designed to ease the effects of the Great Depression. The contractor ran three 5-hour shifts per day, six days a week. Nolan Brothers hired workers entirely from Mineral and Missoula counties and paid them in cash each week. During the winter of 1933, Nolan Brothers' 35 workers had erected the falsework and began placement of the steel

on the bridge. The contractor hoped to have the steel trusses installed and the falsework removed by the time high water on the Clark Fork made the work difficult in the late spring of 1933. While Nolan Brothers completed the bridge during the first week of July 1933, Archie Douglas, the road contractor, wouldn't complete the approaches to the structure until early September 1933. Until then, motorists navigated the old road on the south side of the Clark Fork River. The final cost of the Cyr Bridge was a little less than \$64,000. The bridge was an important component of US Highway 10 until bypassed by Interstate 90 in 1967.

Recently, MDT programmed a project to rehabilitate this magnificent structure. Work to the bridge would include replacing the concrete deck, strengthening or replacing the approach spans, repairing the concrete piers, and replacing the badly deteriorated concrete guardrails. The bridge will continue to carry traffic on Old US 10 and provide a gateway for the countless kayakers and rafters who put in on the river below its unique steel trusses.





Cyr Bridge crosses the Clark Fork River near Alberton

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information, call (406)444-3423, TTY (800)335-7592, or the Montana Relay at 711.

MDT Wants Your Comments On New Projects

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit https://mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/planning/proposed_proj.pdf, http://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stip.shtml or call 1-800-714-7296. You can mail comments on proposed projects to MDT at MDT Project Analysis Manager, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001 or e-mail them to: mdtnewprojects@mt.gov.

Inside This Issue

BaRSAA Update and Funds Deadline

Contact Information

Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call 800-714-7296 (in Montana only or 406-444-3423. The TTY number is 800-335-7592.
Administrator-Lynn Zanto (Izanto@mt.gov)444-3445
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